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TRADE OF THE UNITED STATES WITH THE EAST.

BY WORTHINGTON C. FORD, CHIEF OF THE UNITED STATES BUREAU
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Wherever the eastern trade has centered in the past, great opulence and political power have been seen. Commercial discovery, diplomacy, and mercantile selfishness have sought to monopolize or share in this trade. The United States has borne its full share, and before the founding of the government, American vessels had brought cargoes from Asia. It has participated in the privileges secured by other nations; and has even borrowed a leaf from Chinese policy in discouraging foreign imports and excluding the Chinese. The eastern countries are almost purely agricultural, more than 90 per cent. of the population dependent upon the soil. China and Japan contribute about 2 per cent. of the imports and take 4 per cent. of the exports of the United Kingdom. In 1894 about 8 per cent. of the imports of the United States was derived from the eastern countries, and 2 per cent. of its domestic exports sent to them. There is little elasticity in our exports. In 1821 we exported to China merchandise to the value of \$4,290,560, to which the products of the United States gave \$338,535. In 1893 we exported \$3,900,457, an apparent decrease on 1821, but the exports of 1893 were entirely American products. In 1821 the exports to the East Indies were only \$32,000; in 1890, \$4,500,000. In 1860 (the first returns available) the exports to Japan were *nil*; in 1894 about \$4,000,000. This export trade depends upon one commodity—illuminating oil. The light of Asia is more and more made in America and Russia. Some cottons sent to China, and some wheat flour for Hong Kong, with oil, make 77 per cent of our exports to Asia.

Imports into the United States from the East show im-

portant differences. British India, under English guidance and capital, is becoming important as an exporter of raw materials, and of some manufactures. Indian wheat, Indian cotton, and Indian manufactures of cotton and jute, are factors in the world's trade, and even compete with the United States. Japan has sought to develop its resources without outside assistance, and has encouraged the introduction of western methods and western skill. China stands apart in its denial of all progress; and as a result Chinese commodities no longer hold their own in foreign markets. Its silks are discredited; its teas are no longer dominant, being crowded out by the products of Japan, Ceylon and Italy. Its trade is stationary. In 1821 the imports into the United States from India were \$1,530,799; from China, \$3,111,952; and from Japan in 1860, less than \$100,000. In 1893 we imported from India \$25,968,554; from China, \$20,636,535; and from Japan, \$27,454,220.

In conclusion it is to be noticed how important a factor Japan may become in the commercial East. For the first time it is recognized in diplomacy as a sovereign state. Japan may seek to play in Asia the role of Great Britain in Europe. With the prestige of victory, she has it in her grasp to hold the balance of power in Asia. If Japan cannot hold the political government of China, she is in a position to exploit it commercially. Should Japan secure control of the productive forces of China, an industrial power of overwhelming importance may be developed. Stationary and backward as China is, when compared with its neighbors, it might easily exceed them in importance, if it could borrow their desire for progress, or have its productive and industrial ability intelligently directed by others. It is in the light of Japan's preëminence in Asia that our new treaty becomes of high import.